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NAME OF AUTHOR/*NOM DE L'AUTEUR* ROGER WARBURTON ASHWORTH

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NAME OF SUPERVISOR/*NOM DU DIRECTEUR DE THÈSE* Dr. H.A. Hargreaves

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DATED/*DATÉ* 26 August 1975 SIGNED/*SIGNÉ* R.W.B. Ashworth

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A UNIFYING THEME IN THE TRAGEDIES OF THOMAS OTWAY

by

ROGER WARBURTON ASHWORTH

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "A Unifying Theme in the Tragedies of Thomas Otway", submitted by Roger Warburton Ashworth in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

W. A. Thompson
Supervisor

R. J. Merrett

James D. Foley

Date 3 July, 1975

ABSTRACT

Thomas Otway's tragedies were immediately successful in the theatre, and The Orphan and Venice Preserv'd held the stage for well over one hundred years. Their success has been attributed to the intensity of the emotion expressed in the dialogue. Otway is credited with having helped to transform tragic drama from "heroic" to "sentimental," and all his tragic works may be classified according to how successfully they convey emotional sentiment.

Apart from their emotional content, however, Otway's tragedies have another common element--one that is more open to literary inquiry. All deal with a tragic conflict between those in, and those out of, power; and the emotional agony that the heroes and heroines display is the natural reaction of young people frustrated by forces of authority that they can neither understand nor control. Otway's tragic heroes are repressed by those in authority, and, driven by their own advancing maturity, are compelled to strike against those who restrain them. The conflict assumes tragic proportions because the authority figures, although at the age when they should retire, use improper means to continue to exercise power. The result is that the heroes are forced to respond in an excessive way that has disastrous consequences.

This central tragic idea can be traced to the playwright's life. With his Tory sentiments, Otway supported the monarchical and aristocratic systems of government, but his own financial and social failure and early death explain his understanding of, and sympathy for,

members of the rising generation who are denied their rightful place in society and yet who, driven by frustration, find themselves victims of their own justifiably-strong passions.

Otway has explored the tragic effects of two kinds of authority, paternal and political, and The Orphan and Venice Preserv'd are the respective culminations of these two topics. Hence, while he was developing his skill in emotional writing, Otway was simultaneously working on a literary theme, and part of the excellence of the tragedies, and particularly the last two, lies in the success with which he used the question of authority to dramatise those tragic features of the human condition that he learned about from his own experience. Read from a literary as distinct from a dramatic point of view, Otway's tragedies, especially The Orphan and Venice Preserv'd, can be seen to be works of distinction although lack of interest in emotional sentiment has driven them from the stage.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	INTRODUCTION.....	1
II	A NOTE ON ALCIBIADES (1675).....	14
III	DON CARLOS PRINCE OF SPAIN (1676).....	20
IV	TITUS AND BERENICE (1676).....	28
V	THE HISTORY AND FALL OF CAIUS MARIUS (1679).....	32
VI	THE ORPHAN OR, THE UNHAPPY MARRIAGE (1680).....	37
VII	VENICE PRESERV'D, OR, A PLOT DISCOVER'D (1682)..	49
VIII	CONCLUSION.....	61
	FOOTNOTES.....	64
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	75

Quotations from the plays are taken from The Works of Thomas Otway: Plays, Poems, and Love-Letters, edited by J. C. Ghosh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932).

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A problem presented to the modern reader of Thomas Otway is the striking contrast between Otway's earlier success upon the English stage and his subsequent total decline. His Caius Marius, a re-written version of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, eclipsed its predecessor for fifty years. Don Carlos "got more Money than any preceding Modern Tragedy."[1] The Orphan held the stage for one and a half centuries; Venice Preserv'd for nearly two. While his reputation was high, not only audiences, but men of recognised literary standing praised Otway. Oliver Goldsmith, writing in The Bee in 1759, estimated Otway to be "next to Shakespeare the greatest genius England has produced in tragedy."[2] The comparison with Shakespeare is believed to have originated with Pope: in The Epistle to Augustus the poet praises certain English tragedians for having avoided falling under French influence (at the price, however, of a degree of roughness),

> Not but the tragic spirit was our own,
> And full in Shakespeare, fair in Otway shone:
> But Otway failed to polish or refine,
> And fluent Shakespeare scarce effaced a line.[3]

Even the lack of polish was considered a virtue, for audiences and literary cognoscente alike admired Otway for his naturalness and tenderness. In the preface to De Arte Graphica Dryden excuses Otway's faults in view of his skill in depicting "passions" and "nature":

> I will not defend everything in his Venice Preserv'd but I must bear this testimony to his memory, that the passions are truly touched in it, though perhaps there is somewhat to be desired, both in the grounds of them and in the height and elegance of expression; but nature is there, which is the greatest beauty.[4]

Otway's reputation has now declined to the point that he is rarely performed and little heard of. The usual reason given is that the tenderness and passionate emotion that were once praised by audiences were undermined and made rather ridiculous by the later practice of studying dramatic works from the printed text. According to this theory, Otway's reputation was safe provided that his tragedies were supported by impressive acting but were not subjected to the probing of literary analysis. The different effects obtained by reading or by viewing Otway are juxtaposed in the London Magazine of November, 1823:

> . . . the chief performers generally top their parts, and the scenery, machinery, decorations, etc., delude the spectators into an expenditure of applause which the mere reader of these pieces would never sanction.[5]

Aline Mackenzie Taylor repeats the theory in her study of the stage history of The Orphan and Venice Preserv'd:

> The standards of literature imposed upon drama crushed to death plays whose true life was in the "soul of lively action" and in the actors who bodied them forth behind the footlights.[6]

The theory, simply put, states that the distinction between the literary and dramatic qualities of a play introduced by reading in the study as distinct from observing in the theatre was fatal to Otway's reputation.

In fact, the theory is unsatisfactory in accounting for Otway's altered fortunes in the theatre. While a distinction may be drawn

between the dramatic and the literary content of a play, the argument that literary considerations alone drove Otway's tragedies from the stage is faulted because it accepts this distinction only to reject it again. The argument assumes that the dramatic and the literary are sufficiently independent to allow plays to be performed solely on dramatic grounds without benefit of close reading, but that once close reading is introduced, the plays must stand or fall as performable works on a purely literary decision because the native dramatic merit that first caused them to be performed is somehow destroyed. The separation of the two qualities (dramatic and literary) necessary to start the argument, has to be abandoned to bring it to a close. And when it is remembered that Otway's literary weakness has had to be invented not for itself but to account for some facts of theatrical history, the theory is found to have the supplementary failing that it assumes without literary proof, that Otway's tragedies cannot withstand literary analysis.

An easier way to explain the rejection of Otway's tragedies from the stage is to see their removal as the result of what Ham calls a "curious reversal of taste."[7] What was considered by audiences in one age as the effusion of natural emotion was considered in another as a display of tawdry sentiment. But while the historical fact of Otway's tragedies having been rejected from the theatre cannot be argued with, such treatment may not fairly reflect his continuing literary importance. While exaggerated claims for his position in English letters are not intended, it will be argued in this dissertation that Otway

is more than merely a sentimentalist, and that if we were to judge his literary stature from his current condition as a performable playwright, we would reject the good with the allegedly bad.

If the playwright has developed an intellectual theme in a manner corresponding to the evolution of the emotional theme, we could expect this, too, to show itself as a unifying motif, especially as his writing career lasted for only eight years (1674-82). As he returns, in each play, to the development of emotional tenderness, we may search for his interest in some analogous "literary" material characteristic of his way of thought. And, in fact, such matter and such a development are to be found. He took his plots from a variety of sources; Plutarch, Shakespeare, the French pre-novelist Saint-Réal, contemporary political events, and his own life. But he was not merely an opportunist, casting around to find any topic that might bring success. Through the varied plots that he selected from scattered sources, there is a theme that he can be seen developing throughout his writing career. It is, quite simply, an investigation of the tragic consequences of authority misused. Whereas much tragedy, in English and other languages, tells of the decline and fall of great men, Otway's tragedies describe the problems confronting young men who are prevented from rising to the position that their energies and ambitions prepare them for, because men of the older generation cling to power beyond the time when they should make way for the on-coming generation. Tragic effect is created in these plays, partly from seeing the heroes suffering at the hands of those in authority over them, and partly from

our recognition that in killing their own heirs, the authority figures are, as it were, killing themselves by destroying the very sons who were meant to continue the family line.

To call Otway's younger men "heroes" is to put a strain upon that word. Their most striking quality is that of vacillating between different loyalties, not, like their "heroic" counterparts, from strong but mutually-exclusive emotions; but through a weakness of character that robs them of mature judgement. In every play we meet these young men at a crisis in their lives. Hitherto they have been dominated by older men who now continue to have a claim upon them, as father or father-in-law, or king or Senator. And because the heroes have been and continue to be dominated, they have an excessive respect for authority. We join them as they are coming to maturity, most particularly political and sexual maturity, and hence are being driven to assert themselves against the authority that is constraining them. Their vacillation, rendering them incapable of effective action, is a manifestation of an inner struggle as they try to respond to conflicting calls on their energies. By training and psychological constitution they tend to remain in a state of dependence on those in authority over them. They wish, as it were, to remain as children. But the onset of maturity forces them, with equal or even greater insistence, to make a bid for freedom and become men in their own right. The only people who could resolve the problem are the authority figures, and that by yielding authority. But they, far from being prepared to make way for the new generation, are determined to hold power beyond the

time when it is good either for them or for their subordinates that they should. The device that these authority characters employ is essentially a trick. They have personal ambitions as men (to hold political power, or to possess women, or to dominate their heirs) but they gratify these ambitions by exercising powers that come from their official position in the family or state. By refusing to distinguish between their private and public roles, they get their way as men or lovers by ruthlessly using the privileges that come from such sanctions as fatherhood or kingship.

This, I believe, is Otway's central tragic motif. It is only feebly presented in the first tragedy, Alcibiades, but increasingly dominates the plays until in the last, Venice Preserv'd, whole groups of men are ranged on either side of the generation gap with the older men ultimately emerging the victors in the mortal combat, and ordering the annihilation of the younger men who have attempted to usurp their authority. Most of the criticism of Otway's works deals with detailed problems of particular plays--the large amount of swearing,[8] or the significance of the dagger in Venice Preserv'd;[9] the effect of the Restoration code of marriage in The Orphan;[10] the heroic content of Don Carlos,[11] to mention only some of the more obvious questions--but such criticism, enlightening though it surely is, belongs to what might be called secondary criticism in that it elucidates separate ideas one by one, before undertaking the primary critical task of explaining what Otway's tragedies use as their common theme. This failure to discover a common topic underlying the tragedies extends even

to Thomas Stroup's attempt to see "bitter pessimism" as a general theme,[12] for this, while being a helpful observation, is inconclusive. The tragedies are more than collections of bitter speeches, and Stroup's suggestion raises a more fundamental question, namely: what tragic force is operative in these plays that causes the characters to express themselves in bitter language? The theme of authority, advanced in this dissertation, is meant to provide an answer to this question. When the heroes are confused by what is destroying them, authority misused against them is at least one of the causes that they are looking for. Not that it would have greatly helped them to know, for, as will be shown, the tragic heroes are in no psychological condition to strike back even when they know who their tormentors are.

The idea that all the tragedies are, to a greater or lesser extent, studies of the effects of authority misused, is supported when events of Otway's own life are taken into account. The difficulties experienced by the heroes in their relationships with the heroines and with the authority figures may be traced to the personal difficulties of Otway himself. Several of the critics who have made general remarks about the playwright refer to the extent to which he drew upon his own circumstances to find material for his plays. Perhaps few playwrights give us such a good opportunity to see how life is converted into art. "Otway," says Dr. Johnson, "conceived forcibly and drew originally by consulting nature in his own breast."[13] Montague Summers claims that the playwright's treatment of Jaffeir in Venice Preserv'd "shows the keenest psychological analysis, and, what is especially interesting in

the case of Otway, it would seem to be the dissection of his own heart."[14] And Edmund Gosse says simply, "the poet dipped his pen in his own heart."[15]

The main facts of Otway's life are known.[16] He was born into a good yeoman family, was noted as an intelligent boy, failed as an actor through fear of the audience, gained military experience as a low-ranking officer with an expeditionary force to Holland, and died in poverty at the age of thirty three, possibly from starvation. Of greater interest for the interpretation of his work is his emotional state. He seems to have looked upon people in authority with such intense admiration that in spite of his intelligence and good education he was unable to take his place beside them in a responsible position in government or affairs. He supported the Stuart cause in the persons of Charles II and James, Duke of York; and was unwaveringly a Tory. But his support for these causes was from a distance. Unlike, for example, Thomas Hobbes, who supported the aristocratic principle and himself had the pleasure of living amongst aristocrats, or Dryden, commissioned in Absolom and Achitophel to uphold Tory values from which he himself benefited, Otway seems to have supported established institutions out of a compulsion to submit himself before a power mightier than himself, rather than in hope of joining the ruling class. Dr. Johnson says of him, admittedly perhaps, hinting a royal pension for himself, that he had "the common reward of loyalty--he lived and died neglected."[17] In spite of times of affluence, Otway always returned to a state of dependence on one or other of his several patrons: Plymouth, Falkland, Middlesex, and Rochester.

This need to support authority in the abstract but to both admire and resent the occupants of positions of power, is found in Otway's tragic heroes. The game of authority that is played against them by older men who should retire is successful because the heroes, Otway-like, are unwilling to assume the independence and maturity that they should take on. The heroes live in a state of self-imposed dependence while simultaneously yearning for independence. And the same conflict may be seen in another side of Otway's life. He fell in love with Mrs. Barry who was evidently a good actress off as well as on the stage, and who, in spite of her apparent charms was, according to Summers, "the perfect whore . . . hard as adamant, and possibly sexless."[18] Mrs. Barry was out of Otway's reach for two reasons--because the interest that the writer showed in her was not reciprocated; and because she was already mistress to the Earl of Rochester, Otway's patron, and, given the kind of woman she was, she was unlikely to relinquish richer for poorer. For Otway it was a hopeless affair that grew worse with the passage of time as he allowed himself to be increasingly gripped by unrequited passion.[19] So hopeless, in fact, that the idea suggests itself that he indulged some psychological desire to be mistreated by deliberately, although no doubt unconsciously, attaching himself to a woman who treated him with a cruelty that his nature craved. This attitude towards women is similar to his political loyalty since it expresses the urge both to invite and to resent the exercise of authority over him. Otway's changing attitude towards Mrs. Barry is recorded in the female characters of the tragedies, with the cruel women of earlier

tragedies (Queen Deidamia of Alcibiades and Eboli of Don Carlos) being entirely replaced in later works by pathetic characters (Lavinia of Caius Marius and Monimia of The Orphan); these later women being, according to Ham "the transfigured image of the woman he loved."[20]

The claim that Otway helped to transform tragedy from "heroic" to "sentimental" rests on his creation of the sympathetic heroines of the later tragedies. At the Restoration women actors were a novelty, and Otway was among the first playwrights to recognise and develop the pathos that could be obtained from them. More clearly than the heroes they show that "romantic sentimentalism had come in, and the audience was no longer to reason but to be carried away upon floods of damp emotion."[21] They earned for their creator the epithet "tender Otway."[22] The emotional response that was elicited by the women of Otway's tragedies was so strong that critics have been tempted to see the development of the playwright's skill exclusively as the development of the emotional possibilities of tragedy. Otway, writes William Collins in the "Ode to Pity," "sang the female heart."[23] Such women, intended in the playwright's own words, "to Draw tears from the eyes of the Auditors,"[24] grow in importance as Otway's career progresses. Sir Walter Scott records with approval that "more tears have been shed, probably, for the sorrows of Belvidera, and Monimia, than for those of Juliet and Desdemona."[25] Ham finds Belvidera so important a character in Venice Preserv'd that he feels that the play should have been named after her.[26]

In spite of their importance as emotional figures, however,

these female characters appear in a different light when studied away from the theatre. They offer an example of the distinction that must be made between the dramatic and the literary. As creations for the theatre they were the most important contributors to Otway's fame as a tragedian (and because of a reaction against the sentiment that they expressed, it is through them that he now stands condemned). With regard to the theme of authority misused, however, they are much less important, serving to emphasise the struggle between the generations acted out by the male characters. Hence, the Queen of Don Carlos and Lavinia of Caius Marius, by their unswerving but unavailing loyalty to the heroes, serve to underline the frustrations of these young men. Monimia and Belvidera, although making a more impressive contribution to the action, do not offer diversions from the central question of authority, but, rather, heighten its importance. The cruel women of the earlier plays may be seen as female counterparts of the authoritative males, while Berenice of Titus and Berenice is an intermediate character, showing, with Eboli of Don Carlos, some qualities of an authority figure, but, with the tender heroines, some qualities of a suffering lover, herself imposed upon by the authority of the Roman law.

It is as subjects of male sexual rivalry that the female characters most notably emphasise the conflict between the generations. The rivalry between the two generations of men is complicated and indeed often dominated by sexual antagonisms. The control that the older men wish to continue to exercise includes sexual control over women being sought by the heroes. In Don Carlos, father and son are in direct competition for the same woman, and the father gains her by the typical

device of using his authority as a king to satisfy his ambitions as a man. Marius senior in Caius Marius interferes with the happiness of his son by insisting on a filial loyalty from Marius junior stronger than the marital loyalty that the young hero's wife can command; Priuli in Venice Preserv'd takes revenge on Jaffeir for converting Belvidera from a daughter to a wife; and Acasto's unwillingness to allow for his sons' sexual maturity is the root of the tragic events in The Orphan. The dominance of the heroes by the older men in sexual matters affords the most striking illustrations of the anachronistic energy of the authority figures. While behaving as senior statesmen or benevolent fathers, they further their ambitions as competitors to the heroes. They bring to their activities the power of authority to aid them in being, in effect, rival young men.

To facilitate the explication of individual plays, the features of Otway's tragic vision and tragic technique elucidated above may now be listed.

1. The tragic events arise from the misuse of authority by older men. These men cling to power beyond the time when they should hand their authority to younger men of the rising generation--often their own sons.

2. The method by which these older men retain power is to use the sanction of office or of fatherhood to re-enforce their ambitions as men.

3. The authority figures usually win in the conflict between the generations, but only at the expense of destroying their own heirs.

4. The conflict between the generations most notably takes the form of sexual rivalry, with the old men continuing to be sexually active beyond the age when the younger men are impelled by sexual development to replace them.

5. The younger men do not simply lose in a clash of wills, but are defeated by their own psychological natures. They lack confidence in themselves and have an undue respect for authority--both of which qualities militate against their bid for independence.

6. Otway's female characters are in two groups and emphasise the struggle between the generations of men. The first group, reflecting the authoritative males, consists of ambitious women who scheme for their personal profit; and the second group, reflecting the heroes, comprises tender heroines, lacking power to assist those to whom they are loyal, and compelled to substitute passionate language for decisive action.

7. Otway developed these ideas directly from experiences in his own life.

Not all of these points are found in all of the tragedies--Alcibiades and Titus and Berenice being particularly anomalous. But they are sufficiently common to offer a useful guide to Otway's mode of thinking; and provide a helpful scheme whereby individual plays may be studied.

CHAPTER II

A NOTE ON ALCIBIADES (1675)

Alcibiades does not conform to the pattern that is found in Otway's later tragedies. It is more appropriately placed in the genre of the heroic tragedy. It fits Nettleton's definition of the heroic as containing ". . . a semi-historical atmosphere . . . a foreign setting, [and] themes of love and valour that concern characters of high rank moving before a background of war . . . ."[1] According to Summers it is "a typical heroic tragedy."[2] As in Dryden's tragedies, the moral condition of the characters ranges from piously good to monstrously evil, in this case from King Agis to the "Infernal hag" Queen Deidamia. Both Alcibiades and Patrochlus display the confidence of typical heroic heroes: Alcibiades' language proclaims his self-assurance and his determination to assert himself against overwhelming forces. His defiance of Tissaphernes, for instance, is decidedly heroic:

> Alcibiades. Have I so many dangers over-past
> Poorly to shrink from villainy at last?
> No, with my innocence I'le brave his hate,
> And meet it in a free undaunted state;
> See all with smiles, as fearless, and as gay,
> As Infants unconcern'd at dangers play.
> (IV, 301-06)

The conflicting devotion to love and honour which had been the hallmark of English heroic tragedy since the time of D'Avenant, is seen to operate in Patrochlus who must defy his father to remain loyal to his king, and in Theramnes who abandons his military position in Athens to pursue a hopeless love for Timandra in an uncongenial Sparta.

Otway took the hero for this play from Plutarch, as he was to do in Caius Marius, and, as in the later play, he altered the original character to suit his own purposes. Plutarch's Alcibiades (to cite Sir Thomas North's translation) "had many great faults and imperfections. For he was too dainty in his fair, wantonly given unto light women, riotous in bankets, vain and womanish in apparel."[3] By offending against the laws and customs of Athens, he showed "manifest tokens of a man that aspired to be King," and, like a chameleon, he "could put upon him any manners, customs, or fashions of what nation soever." In place of this character, Otway produces a noble youth, driven from his home by a jealous Senate, and, while trying to serve his newly-adopted king, imperilled by a vicious and cunning old courtier. He is, writes Ham, "an utterly unhistorical Athenian."[4]

One of the functions of the newly-created Alcibiades is to advocate loyalty according to Otway's political principles. The playwright's Tory sympathies are clearly advertised in this tragedy. Monarchies are praised in the play because they can "contract to give a steady blow" against republics or parliamentary oligarchies--"those monstrous many-headed pow'rs (III, 17)." King Agis is a gentle old man, admirable as a person, and a good king, able to draw out the loyalties of his better subjects. More than merely a private man, he symbolises such abstractions as the law and the state. Says Alcibiades:

> Yours Sir, like Heav'ns great soul is General;
> Dispensing its kind influence on all.
> This makes success and Victory repair,
> To move with you as in their proper Sphear.
> (I, 223-26)

Even the ambitious Tissaphernes is overawed by the prospect of true kingship at the moment when he expects to seize a king's power but without the responsibility:

> Tiss. -hah! how alter'd am I grown!
> I stand amaz'd and dare not venture on.
> There is in Majesty a secret charm,
> That puts a fetter on a Traytors arm;
> I cannot do't.
> (V, 139-43)

Although in his later tragedies Otway would be harsh towards individuals who wielded authority, he never questioned the value of authority in the family or the state, when properly used. His preoccupation with the question of authority is a continuous heroic thread to be found in all his tragedies although eventually in so modified a form as to be hardly recognisable.

Despite its obviously heroic features, in some particulars Alcibiades begins to reveal some of the qualities characteristic of Otway's later "sentimental" tragedies. Principal among these is the overactivity of the older generation, exemplified in this play by the Spartan general Tissaphernes, who continues to be ambitious for power at a time when he is expected to retire. Considering him a dutiful officer of his country, King Agis offers him shelter and friendship at the end of a military life devoted to the service of the state. But, expressing sentiments that will be echoed by corresponding figures in later tragedies, Tissaphernes rejects the call to retirement:

> Tiss. Must he [Alcibiades] at last tumble my Trophies down,
> And revel in the Glories I have won?
> Whilst from my honours they me disengage,
> With a dull Compliment to feeble Age.
> (I, 285-288)

One reason for his refusal to be superannuated is that his anachronistic energy will not allow him to "confine" his "spacious soul." Such a personality may be seen as a development of the assertive "heroic" hero. Tissaphernes' speeches at the end of the play have the ring of heroic defiance. For example,

> Revenge, Ambition, all that's ill shall be
> My bus'ness; so I'll baffle destinie.
> Hell! no,--
> I'l act such things whilst here I have abode,
> Till my own Trophys raise me to a God
> (V, 29-33)

re-iterates the extreme self-assurance, although for an ignoble cause, of Dryden's heroic Almanzor: "But know that I alone am King of me./ I am as free as nature first made man,/ Ere the base laws of servitude began."[5]

Another (and related) reason for Tissaphernes' refusal to retire is that he has an improper view of his function in the state, as revealed in his rhetorical question to Patrochlus,

> Tiss. Can you behold him [Alcibiades] rev'ling in my place,
> And turning all my honours to disgrace:
> And can you of so little value prize
> The honour of your blood, not to shed his?
> (III, 227-30)

He looks upon the army as an organisation to be operated for his own glory, and upon the rank of general as a personal possession. To Otway the Tory, this is a wrong view of military office: the correct view is expressed in Alcibiades' address to the King:

Alci. Conqu'rors that are Triumphant in the Field
Must at their Monarch's feet their Trophies yield;
For all those glorys which their Conquests claim,
They only have subordinate from them.
Thus though my Sword this Captive had o'ercome,
It is from You he must expect his Doom.
(III, 72-77)

Tissaphernes displays that confusion about his private and public roles shown by authority figures of Otway's more typical tragedies. Alcibiades departs from the pattern of the later plays, however, in that the son rejects paternal authority when he sees it wrongly used. Patrochlus rebels against Tissaphernes with:

Patr. Thus all the bonds of duty cancell'd are.
Whilst such black horrours in your soul I see,
Y'are not my Father, but my enemy.
Now against me let all your vengeance come,
Thus thus my breast for your revenge has room.
Brave Alcibiades.--
No, since such barbarous mischiefs you dare do,
I'l dye for him, but scorn to live for you.
(III, 253-60)

And in Act V Patrochlus physically drives his father from the stage. Hence, although Tissaphernes declares war on men of the younger generation, urging the death of Alcibiades (Act III) and of his own son (Act IV), this play is atypical in that Tissaphernes the old man dies during the course of the action, while Patrochlus, the young man, remains alive at the end.

The sexual competition that takes place between the generations in Otway's mature tragedies occurs in Alcibiades between two of the younger men--Alcibiades and Theramnes. Both love the same woman, Timandra, but Alcibiades, himself frustrated by the calculating Tissaphernes, in turn frustrates (and eventually kills) his rival,

Theramnes. Although under Otway's hands Plutarch's Alcibiades was transformed into a sympathetic character, the reader's attitude towards the English Alcibiades is left ambivalent because, in pursuing Timandra, the lover is cast in the rôle of oppressor as well as oppressed. The hero of Alcibiades, in the Otwavian sense, is neither the "heroic" Alcibiades, nor the successful Patrochlus, but the minor character, Theramnes. He is driven by great emotional urgency to try to win Timandra, and is forced to make a bid for her affections by criminal means because the acceptable ways to attain her are denied him. That he is not incorrigibly evil is shown by his remorse before his death: rather, he is compelled to do evil to alleviate an unbearable emotional constraint. "I am," he cries, "too unhappy to be good." His situation is closely analogous to that of Polydore in The Orphan.

Theramnes' ineffectual part in the competition for Timandra may have been suggested to Otway because it reflected his own relationship with Mrs. Barry, the actress whose attention he craved but never received, and his then patron Lord Rochester. To be misunderstood, unloved, and defeated, appear to have been the reward for the playwright's interest in Mrs. Barry,[6] and similar suffering is the hallmark of Theramnes and of his counterparts in the later tragedies. An important part of the development of Otway's characteristic tragic style is the increased emphasis given to the defeatist victims of authority, of which Theramnes is the prototype.

CHAPTER III

DON CARLOS PRINCE OF SPAIN (1676)

Don Carlos is the earliest of Otway's tragedies to display the full range of features belonging to the Otwavian scheme. It deals with a man of the older generation (Philip II of Spain) in a position of authority, aware of his declining powers and determined to re-assert himself through the use of the royal prerogative in the state, and his paternal authority within his household. The Otwavian tragic hero is Philip's son, Don Carlos, who, although at the age when the onset of maturity is urging him to seek independence, is too indecisive to break away from his father's control. The young Queen of Spain, promised in marriage to Carlos, but now claimed by Philip, is the tragic heroine--a "tender" woman emotionally involved in the plot but powerless to alter events in her favour. Otway did not take his narrative directly from Spanish history, but from a fictitious account due to the Abbé de Saint-Réal. In replacing the historical Carlos, described by Summers as a "malignant, epileptic, gibbous, lame cretin," with the fictitious character--a "young Prince, handsome in face and gallant of spirit,"[1]--Otway was able to introduce into Don Carlos the conflict (a struggle between two generations of men and implicating a young woman) that was to become the most notable characteristic of his tragic writing. Ham has summarized the plot of Don Carlos: "the mingled fears, jealousies, and love of father and son were one half of the story; the grief, and the divided love and duty of the queen, the other."[2] The

essentials of this summary also apply to Otway's two great tragedies, The Orphan and Venice Preserv'd, the former dealing with the conflict between Acasto and his sons with the involvement of Monimia, and the latter with a political struggle between Senators and rebels with the involvement of Belvidera. Other parallels between Don Carlos and the later tragedies are the triumph of the authority figure, his misuse of political power to satisfy his personal ambition, the sexual rivalry between the generations, and the death of the hero and heroine. Otway's career as a writer of distinctive tragedies begins with Don Carlos.

Philip's jealousy of his son is the initial cause of the tragic events in Don Carlos. The King is not constitutionally obliged to retire from the exercise of power, but his own advancing age and Carlos' arrival at the age of maturity require that he should increasingly play the rôle of elder statesman, preparing to hand over the reins of government. (King Agis of Alcibiades may be seen as Otway's model for the desired behaviour). Philip is unprepared to accept his changing position, choosing instead to re-assert himself in the rôle of a younger, active man. To this end he interferes with the marriage arranged between Carlos and a French princess by marrying the young woman himself. But the marriage, far from providing security against Carlos' encroaching maturity, serves to emphasise the King's advancing age and to heighten his jealousy.

> King. What's all my Glory? all my Pomp? how poor
> Is fading greatness, or how vain is pow'r?
> Where all the mighty Conquests I have seen?
> I who o'er Nations have Victorious been,
> Now cannot quell one little Foe within.
> Curst Jealousy; that poysons all Loves sweets,
> How heavy on my heart the'invader sits.
> (II, 109-15)

Philip is incapable of consummating the marriage, and, under the influence of jealousy, accuses the Queen and Carlos of having a sexual liaison--a charge against which the Queen appeals in vain:

> Queen. . . . Conscious of your Age my faith was blam'd
> And I a lewd Adulteress proclaim'd;
> Accus'd of foulest Incest with your Son:
> What more could my worst Enemy have done?
> (V, 155-58)

Philip's attempt to disrupt the progress of Carlos' maturity by interfering with the marriage was made possible by the authority that he wields as king. He has control of the diplomatic apparatus but manipulates it in an unusual way for, whereas royal marriages may be arranged to complete international treaties, Philip alters a treaty to procure a marriage. Complains the Queen:

> Queen. It was by that unhappy France was led
> When though by Contract I should Carlos wed,
> I was an offering made to Philip's bed.
> (II, 197-99)

The arrangement is made at a diplomatic cost since it leads to tension between France and Spain at a time when Spain is weakened by a revolt in its Belgian colonies. Don John, the voice of reason, urges Philip to face the public consequences of his private schemes by becoming "something less a man and more a King (V, 64)."

Incapable of putting his kingly responsibilities before his personal wishes, Philip responds by disinheriting Carlos and tyrannising over the Queen. Again it is Don John who urges the King to modify his behaviour:

> John. Why would you cut a sure Succession off,
> At which your Friends must grieve, and Foes will laugh;
> As if since Age has from you took away
> Increase, you'd grow malicious and destroy!
> (V, 73-76)

Philip desires victory over his dependents more than security for his kingdom and in this he has his wish as he drives his wife and son to death. He converts the relationship between the generations into a battle, and only when he has won the battle can he take a generous view of his heir. He pleads with his dying son:

> King. Why wert thou made so excellently good;
> And why was it no sooner Understood?
> But I was Curs't, and blindly led astray;
> Oh for thy Father, for thy Father pray.
> (V, 415-18)

Even with Carlos and the Queen dead, however, Philip does not return to his duties, but instead takes refuge from his predicament in insanity. To the end he will not accept that he is growing old, that his behaviour must change, and that he must prepare to yield power. Insanity itself is a victory over the threats that he has fought against during the action of the play.

The rivalry between Philip and Carlos is exceptionally sharp because both men are in competition for the same woman. The relationship between king and prince is governed more by paternal than political authority. For Carlos, fatherhood is a more powerful call to loyalty than kingship:

> Carlos. No: tho' unjust, you are my Father still,
> And from that title must your safety own:
> 'Tis that which awes my hand, and not your Crown.
> (IV, 488-90)

The rivalry of King and Prince over the Queen is reminiscent of the classical Oedipan relationship between Laius, Oedipus, and Jocasta, of Sophicles' Oedipus the King, that has been popularised in Freudian psychology as the expression of an architypal subconscious sexual

rivalry between father and son.[3] The natural jealousy that a son is supposed to feel towards his father is precluded in its pure form from Don Carlos because the Queen is not Carlos' mother. It is significant, however, that insofar as Otway does develop the Oedipan idea, he does it in an inverted form. We normally look at the Oedipus complex from the point of view of the son, who has an instinctive wish to kill his father and have sex with his mother. In Don Carlos the opposite is true, for it is the father who wishes to negate the son and have sex with the daughter-in-law. In support of a tragic scheme that shows the authority figure to be unnaturally active in old age, Otway has given Philip a jealous attitude towards the Queen that, in a more natural family, would have been reserved for Carlos.

True to the pattern of Otway's tragic heroes, the Prince is more skilled in arguing for his independence than in seizing it. He opposes his father, but only verbally.

> Carlos: Duty! to whom? He's not my Father: no:
> Back with your orders to the Tyrant go,
> Tell him his fury drives too much one way;
> I'm weary on't and can no more obey.
> (IV, 162-65)

He promises great actions but never carries them out: "My Father should have singl'd out some Crown," he declares, "And bidden me go conquer't for my own:/ He should have seen what Carlos would have done (IV, 370-72)." He threatens to elope with the Queen and to rebel against his father, but he does neither. The Prince lies in the King's shadow and protests about his position in words, but he expends so much energy objecting to his treatment that it becomes evident that objecting is the height of his ambition. There is a tone

of self-indulgence in the way in which he meekly blames himself for the unhappy events that beset the Spanish court:

> Carlos. Life was my Curse and giv'n me sure in Spight.
> Oh had I perished when I first saw light.
> I never then these miseries had brought
> On you nor by you had been guilty thought.
> (V, 360-63)

Ham suggests that Carlos is indecisive because, "in unending conflict with himself," he is torn between love, rage, loyalty, friendship, and justice.[4] These qualities, however, do not necessarily cancel each other out and the Prince's inability to select a course of action must be attributed, ultimately, to his incapacity for action resulting from a native weakness of character. Some blame for Carlos' failure must attach to his own defeatist nature which invites misuse by those in authority. Of course, this defeatism in turn may be seen as the product of the treatment that Carlos has received from childhood in the form of Philip's ceaseless jealousy and the cunning innuendo of Rui Gomez.

Of the female characters, Eboli represents one Otwavian type--malicious, ambitious, and loyal only to herself. Her behaviour helps to emphasise the fight between the generations because politically and emotionally she is in an intermediate position between Don Carlos and Philip. While the Queen is a helpless victim of circumstances, Eboli strives to control events, like the King, but finds herself frustrated through lack of power, like the Prince.[5] She is not content to be the wife of her impotent "old Lord," Rui Gomez, partly from jealousy of the Queen, and partly because she has too much energy to be satisfied in her position as Queen's attendant. Eboli's decline occurs for

the same reason as that of Carlos: she lacks the authority to convert her ambition into successful action.

As an outsider and a woman innocent of the problems that beset the Spanish court, the Queen is the character most pitifully enmeshed in the framework of authority that emanates from the King. That Philip and Carlos are fighting over her brings her no advantage because she does not have the ambition to benefit from their conflict to seize power for herself. She is another victim of confusion about roles for, just as Philip misuses his power as a king to have his will as a man, so he brings the French princess to Spain as a royal personage but on finding her "unfortunately fair," treats her as a woman. At first she acquiesces, considering the King's command "Rigorous necessity." Although she comes to recognise his falseness, she is overwhelmed by his royal power, by his control of his son's loyalty, and by the machinations of Rui Gomez and Eboli. Like other Otwavian heroines, she has more comprehension of the malicious forces than the hero, but is powerless to set the situation right. The treatment that she receives in the Spanish court is a condemnation of Philip's attempt at youthful behaviour in his old age. She came prepared to love the King as a daughter-in-law: her inability to love him as a wife reflects upon Philip's unnaturalness in marrying her.

Although Rui Gomez is the obviously evil character in Don Carlos, the tragic events stem from the King's unwillingness to allow for his son's maturity. Whereas Philip should be a respected figurehead, drawing to himself the admiration and good will of the whole court, he sows discord, and repels the generous advances of his family.

A direct link can be established between Philip's unnatural over-activity in the twilight of his life, the bitterness with which he recognises his impotence, the animosity with which he turns against those who want to love him, and the trouble that is consequently brought upon his innocent subjects. Any criticism of the institution of English monarchy, however, is more apparent than real. Philip is not only a foreign king ruling over a nation in competition with England and therefore a natural target for an English loyalist, but further, he fails because he is hardly a king at all, being more a private man wielding a king's powers. And although Don John may be read as a sympathetic dramatisation of the Duke of Monmouth, the bastard son of Charles II, this character firmly rejects any legal right to the crown. Nevertheless, in subsequent tragedies, Otway removed any confusion by introducing his authority figures, not as kings, but as, in one case a retired courtier (Acasto in The Orphan) or, in others, as republican leaders (Marius senior in Caius Marius, and Priuli in Venice Preserv'd). In Otway's world, tragic events are not brought about by the exercise of monarchical or parental powers as such, but by the misuse of such abstract powers by actual men.

CHAPTER IV

TITUS AND BERENICE (1676)

Titus and Berenice is a brief tragedy based on scanty material taken from the Bérénice of Racine, but such themes as it contains are easily recognised as recurring Otwavian concerns, and such changes as Otway made to the Racinian version are typical expressions of the English playwright's habits of mind.

In Titus and Berenice Otway returns to the heroic theme of love and honour. Conflicting devotion to these mutually-exclusive loyalties brings tragic agony upon Titus, Emperor of Rome, and a measure of agony on Antiochus, King of Comogene. Both are in love with Berenice, Queen of Palestine, and the Queen is prepared to accept Titus in marriage. The Roman law states that the emperor may not marry a foreign monarch and Titus determines to obey it in spite of his intense regard for Berenice:

> Titus. For when to Empire first I did attain
> Rome made me swear I would her rights maintain
> I did, and must perform what I then vowed . . . .
> (III, 155-57)

He had hoped even to be a popular emperor, and one of the undesirable effects of his pre-occupation with Berenice is its interference with his imperial duties:

> Titus. The golden days where are they to be found
> So much expected when this head was Crown'd?
> Whose tears have I dry'd up? or in what face
> Can I the fruits of any good act trace?
> (III, 59-62)

There is no escape from the influence of Berenice for when, at the end

of the play she rejects his offer of marriage, Titus, far from taking up his imperial duties as the benign ruler that he had planned to be, resolves to use his power in cruel tyranny. The conflict of love and honour remains unresolved at the end.

An interesting departure from the French source is that in Otway's tragedy the conflict of love and honour is not spontaneous. It is engineered by Berenice who deliberately creates the discord for her own gratification. When she talks of being in love, she wishes to keep Titus and Antiochus infatuated with her. Her show of affection is, in truth, an affectation: she has "with long practice learnt to smile and kill (I, 89)." Her treatment of her lovers is a game, the purpose of which is to allow her to measure the power of her sexual attractiveness. Having set aside Antiochus for the more politically-powerful, and hence more challenging Titus, she wished to persuade the emperor to give up his imperial throne and submit himself to her. Racine's Bérénice contained a heroine genuinely in love with the Roman emperor so that in changing this character into the calculating Berenice, Otway created another of his scheming female characters. Berenice is relatively benign compared, for instance, with Timandra, but she is equally willful. In the final scene of the play she demonstrates to her satisfaction what had been ruefully said about her and Titus in the first scene: "The universe is his and he is hers." She has proved her ascendancy over Titus and Antiochus, and hence over the Roman world and its political institutions, and thereupon she is content that she and her lovers should disband. In keeping with her

skill in displaying false emotion, she threatens suicide only for effect and in this reveals herself as less genuine than Cleopatra of Shakespeare's (and Dryden's) tragedy with whom she otherwise has much in common.

Two aspects of Otway's own life suggest themselves as the genesis of Berenice: the playwright's response to a triangular relationship between himself, his then patron Lord Rochester, and Mrs. Barry; and, secondly, Otway's Tory sympathies that would make loyalty to the constitution sometimes a painful but always a necessary duty, even in the face of personal temptations.

In adapting Titus and Antiochus from the French version of the play Otway has kept close to his source because little alteration was necessary to bring them into the normal Otwavian scheme. The pursuit of unrequited love that these characters engage in is a form of suffering brought on by indecision, and self-inflicted suffering through indecision was to be increasingly the characteristic behaviour of the Otwavian hero. Marius junior of Caius Marius, Castalio of The Orphan and Jaffeir of Venice Preserv'd are incapacitated by divided loyalty, by uncertainty as to whose advice to follow, and by their inability to abide by any one course of action. In Racine, Otway found his own tragic heroes ready-made. It has been suggested for instance, by Summers, that Racine's Titus has little real love for Bérénice but pursues her because by so doing he gives himself an opportunity to exercise his native indecision:

> Perhaps the one weakness, if weakness there be, in Bérénice is the vacillating character of Titus, and that is not to be laid to Racine's charge, for the

> matter is historical. Says Apollo in Tite et Titus of Titus, "Cet honnête homme que vous voyez là est un grand fourbe" (II,i). And in truth such almost seems the case. For all his many poignant words, one has the suspicion that his love for Bérénice weighs lightly, after all in the balance.[1]

Vacillation is also shown by Antiochus who enters the play trying to decide whether or not to return home, and who is still undecided at the end. In placing Antiochus' confession of being a rival to Titus for Berenice's love early in the English version, Otway has emphasised the Syrian's lack of decision. "It renders him colourless" writes Ghosh, "through the rest [of the play]."[2] The disapproving tone of these critics, however, is misplaced. Otway has followed his normal practice in emphasising the wavering quality of his heroes.

The indecisiveness that Racine's male characters display is repeated by Otway but neither writer introduces a domineering authority figure. Titus and Antiochus vacillate simply because it is in their natures so to do. This quality does not have fatal consequences because the characters disperse before the tragic conditions can have their full effect. But in the more intense later tragedies, indecision on the part of the heroes will make a significant contribution to the onset of more serious tragic events.

CHAPTER V

THE HISTORY AND FALL OF CAIUS MARIUS (1679)[1]

Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and Plutarch's Life of Caius Marius are the sources of The History and Fall of Caius Marius. Some critics, seeing Otway's play principally as a re-working of Elizabethan material, consider it a failure. Ham speaks of Otway's "perversion of Shakespeare,"[2] and L. M. Eich, referring to the relative weakness of Otway's language, describes "the mutilation of the text [of Romeo and Juliet]" as "one of the most notorious adaptations out of the past" and speaks disparagingly of Otway's method of adaptation, "if, indeed, such madness has method."[3] These critics make no allowance for this play being Otway's first experiment in writing tragedy in unrhymed language.

Caius Marius was inspired, in part, by the Popish Plot of 1678--a conspiracy contrived by the Whigs under the leadership of the Earl of Shaftesbury, and intended to discredit King Charles and his brother James, Duke of York, and to disrupt the succession. When the plot was exposed there was a Tory reaction to which Otway contributed this play and, later, Venice Preserv'd. The power-hungry and domineering Marius senior is a partisan interpretation of Shaftesbury as he appeared from a Tory point of view. Caius Marius is not, however, merely a piece of political satire. Ham writes that although there is a political theme in the play, "to treat either Lee's Lucius Junius Brutus or the Caius Marius of Otway solely as a political play would be a distortion of all dramatic values."[4]

If Caius Marius is viewed as another expression of Otway's recurring tragic themes rather than as an attempt to "improve" Shakespeare, the changes that Otway has introduced become more acceptable. Marius senior, leader of one of Rome's rival houses, is the typical Otwavian authority figure--an old man clinging to power, unfit for high office, but unwilling to retire after having completed six consulships. His condition is described by Metellus, leader of the opposing house:

> Ev'n Age can't heal the rage of his Ambition.
> Six times the consul's office has he born:
> How well, our present Discords best declare.
> Till now agen, when time has worn him low,
> Consum'd with Age, and by Diseases prest
> He courts the People to be once more chosen,
> To lead the War against King Mithridates.
> (I, 97-103)

Plutarch's Caius Marius provided the model of an ageing leader exerting himself to maintain his former position of prominence:

> Notwithstanding all this, Marius too ambitiously striving like a passioned young man against the weakness and debility of his age, never missed day but he would be in the field of Mars to exercise himself among the young men, showing his body disposed and ready to handle all kind of weapons, and to ride horses: albeit that in his later time, he had no great health of body, because he was very heavy and sad. There were that liked that passing well in him, and went of purpose into the field to see the pains he took, striving to excel the rest. Howbeit those of the better sort were very sorry to see his avarice and ambition, considering specially, that being of a poor man become very rich, and of a right mean person a great estate, that he could not now contain his prosperity within reasonable bounds, nor content himself to be esteemed and honoured, quietly enjoying all he had won . . . .[5]

Under Otway, Marius' harsher qualities are emphasised. The ageing Consul deliberately perpetuates his hatred of Matellus. He despises women for no defined reason, and has a crude view of power;

he is cruel, vindictive, and insatiably ambitious. In old age he persuades himself that he should still dominate the political scene:

> Marius sen. Else why have I thus bustled in the World,
> Through various and uncertain Fortunes hurl'd,
> But to be Great, unequall'd, and alone?
> Which onely he can be who still spurs on
> As swift at last as when he first begun.
> (I, 434-38)

With this and similar speeches he reveals that he is incapable of retiring voluntarily from the exercise of power.

Old Marius takes advantage of his political and paternal authority to dominate his son. The relationship is that of a harsh master dealing with an acquiescent servant. Marius junior has no opportunity to develop interests or ambitions of his own, but must spend his time and energies trying to fulfil the unreasonable demands of his vigorous father. A peaceful moment is interrupted by:

> Marius sen. Where's this Loyterer,
> This most inglorious Son of Caius Marius?
> With folded Arms and down-cast Eyes he stands,
> The Marks and Embleme of a Woman's Fool.
> (III, 193-96)

Young Marius has good reason to dislike Sylla, a young man of the opposing house, since both had been rivals for Lavinia's love. But it is not to settle his own argument that Marius eventually challenges Sylla but "In vindication of a Father's Cause." Yet for all his suffering at his father's hands, Marius junior has a genuine respect for old Marius, crying, at one point: "First perish Rome, and all I hold most dear,/Rather than let me feel my Father's Hate (I, 414-15)."

So entirely does young Marius allow himself to be dominated, that it would seem that he craves domination. The play abounds in

examples of how he is repressed by his father. He enters the play complaining: "like a stubborn Slave that lies/Chain'd to the Floor, stretch helpless on his back,/I look to Liberty, and break my Heart (I, 342-44)," and later he reveals that this treatment leaves him "Not mad, but bound more than a Mad-man is,/Confin'd to limits, kept without my food,/Whipt and tormented . . . (I, 379-81)." Yet there is no suggestion in the play that he could live without the aid of his father's directions. In Plutarch, Marius junior receives a short mention as having turned out to be even more violent than his father. But Otway creates an entire character of Marius junior, and one very different from Plutarch's. Otway's young Marius is indecisive, subservient to his father, frustrated in his desire to live with Lavinia, and unaware of how far his father is responsible for the constraint that binds him. Only at the end of the play does the young man see a connection between his unhappy state and his father's domineering behaviour. Liberty, he recognises belatedly, consists in avoiding "Nor cruel Parents, nor oppressing Laws (V, 383)." His idea of happiness is suggested as he soliloquises on the senile but harmless nurse:

> Marius jun. How happy is the Evening-tide of Life,
> When Phlegm has quencht our Passions, trifling out
> The feeble Remnant of our silly Days
> In Follies, such as Dotage best is pleas'd with,
> Free from the wounding and tormenting Cares
> That toss the thoughtful, active, busy Mind?
> (III, 184-89)

Because Marius senior is unable to attain this mellow happiness, he torments himself, and his son, and Lavinia, his daughter-in-law.

The most serious way in which old Marius frustrates his son

is in the relationship with Lavinia. Whenever young Marius tries to express his affection for his new wife, old Marius makes greater claims on his loyalty. King Philip of Spain interferes with Don Carlos' sexual freedom by setting himself up as a direct rival for the same woman, but Marius senior interferes in a different but just as effective way by keeping his son isolated from Lavinia. Young Marius must "Forget her," "scorn her like a slave," "let her fall," and name her only "with infamy." Such is the young man's nature that he supports his father's cause in preference to his own. He praises his father above Lavinia, and in the language of a lover rather than a son:

> Marius jun. Condemn me rather to the worst of Deaths,
> Or send me chain'd to Sylla like a Slave,
> Then banish me the blessing of your Presence.
> I've thought and bounded all my Wishes so,
> To dye for you is Happiness enough;
> 'Twould be too much t'enjoy Lavinia too.
> (III, 227-32)

Although young Marius has married Lavinia against his father's wishes, this act of defiance does the young couple no good. Lavinia is more perceptive than her husband but she is no match for Marius senior. Eventually the young people die while the old man lives on.

Whereas in Romeo and Juliet the sacrificing of the young people is a preliminary to a reconciliation between the two rival houses, in Caius Marius no such reconciliation follows the death of the young people. In Otway's tragedy, the discord of the older generation continues to dominate the Roman scene: not only do the representatives of the younger generation die, the accord that they symbolise dies with them.

CHAPTER VI

THE ORPHAN OR, THE UNHAPPY MARRIAGE (1680)

Viewing Otway's tragedies as an examination of the effects of authority misused is particularly useful in the explication of The Orphan. This play has proved difficult to analyse because the cause of the tragic events is obscure. Taylor, reviewing many years of criticism, writes, "It is difficult to see where the responsibility [for the tragedy] rests in The Orphan," and again, "Blame has to fall somewhere, either on Chamont the huffer, or Polydore the villain, or Castalio the disingenuous weakling."[1]

The Orphan is distinguished by its domestic setting. Dr. Johnson refers to it as "a domestic tragedy drawn from the middle life,"[2] and Nettleton notes this same quality:

> The Orphan may possibly be termed the first domestic tragedy since Elizabethan drama. The royal personages and impossible heroes of heroic drama are banished from the boards. Rank is forgotten in the poignance of human woe.[3]

The action takes place in Bohemia but Bohemia here means the English countryside and references to the court and "our late and Civil discords" are to the English court and English civil war. Acasto, the head of the household, is an old Cavalier who has retired in disillusion to his country seat, repelled by the falsity and self-seeking of the courtiers in the capital, and the injustices of the fortunes of war. In his way he is an admirable man and may have been an affectionate portrait in memory of the Duke of Ormond whom Otway had respected. This led

one critic, Mrs. Inchbald, to see Acasto as the hero:

> The author's disappointments, both as a soldier and a courtier, may be traced in most of his dramas. He servilely flattered the court in his dedications, prologues and epilogues: but when he spoke by the lips of his characters, then he spoke from his heart--And in the person of Pierre, in Venice Preserv'd as in Acasto here, he has breathed the spirit and suffering of poor Thomas Otway.[4]

Mrs. Inchbald's choice of Acasto as the tragic hero is understandable, but, to be accurate, is only justifiable if The Orphan is seen in the large context of English political history. However, the tragedy is primarily of a domestic rather than a political nature. The events that have led Acasto to betake himself to the country are not the principal events of the play. His new household is an isolated family, and the necessary concomitant of the isolation is that Acasto has become the authority figure in his own home so that the household is to Castalio and Polydore what the court was to him. At home Acasto rules with an iron hand, although a benevolent one.

His two sons, Castalio and Polydore, love their father but are at the age when it is natural for them to seek independence. It is well known from Restoration comedy that being in the country is like being banished from useful life, and the two sons would dearly like to escape into the wider world of action. The play opens with a discussion of this issue carried on among members of the household:

> Paulino. Our Master never would permit his Sons
> To launch for Fortune in th'uncertain world,
> But warns 'em to avoid both Courts, and Camps,
> Where Dilatory Fortune plays the Jilt
> With the brave noble honest gallant man,
> To throw her self away on Fools and Knaves.

Ernesto. They both [the sons] have forward gen'rous active Spirits,
'Tis daily their Petition to their Father,
To send them forth where Glory's to be gotten;
They cry they're weary of their lazy home,
Restless to do some thing that Fame may talk of.
(I, 64-74)

Later, Castalio and Polydore express these complaints for themselves:

Castalio. Now half the Youth of Europe are in Armes,
How fulsome must it be to stay behind,
And dye of rank diseases here at home?

Polydore. No, let me purchase in my Youth Renown,
To make me lov'd and valu'd when I'm old;
I would be busie in the World and learn,
Not like a course and useless dunghill Weed
Fixt to one spot and not just as I grew.

Castalio. Our Father
Has ta'ne himself a surfeit of the World,
and Cries it is not safe that we should taste it . . . .
(I, 99-106)

Critics have overlooked the insidious side to this, or, perhaps, have been unwilling to face the unpalatable conclusion. It means that in The Orphan Acasto is the authority figure, although an elusive one: by love and overprotectiveness he controls his sons just as effectively as, for instance, Marius senior controls young Marius. By claiming, and no doubt believing, that he is saving his sons from harm, Acasto is nonetheless imposing his fears, his preoccupations, his experiences, and the solutions to his problems, on them. Acasto may be applauded for having learnt to avoid the world of political intrigue, and may be loved for trying to pass his experience to his sons. But his wisdom lacks a vital dimension that should have told him that what is appropriate behaviour for a man of his experience and of his age is not the rule by which young men should run their lives. The only way that they can come to maturity is by following a path similar to his own. His desire

to protect becomes, in effect, whether intended or no, the power to frustrate.

Acasto's interference with the freedom of Castalio and Polydore is not as unintentional as at first may appear. Behind his apparent pleasantness he is in open competition with them. By trying to remain as physically youthful as they are, he tries to be "as gay as if his life were young (III, 317)." The two youths express their friendship for each other in the country pastime of boar hunting, and, in Act I, they relate how they have saved each other from danger. But Acasto caps their story with one of his own that contains boastful claims, reminiscent of the style of Marius senior:

> Acasto. When you, Castlio and your Brother left me,
> Forth from the Thickets rush't another Boar,
> So large, he seem'd the Tyrant of the Woods,
> With all his dreadful Bristles rais'd up high . . .
> Till brandishing my well poys'd Javelin high
> With this bold Executing arm, I struck
> The ugly brindled Monster to the heart.
> (II, 2-5 and 11-13)

Acasto is not fit enough for this intense physical activity, as his illness in Act II indicates. But he is unable to refrain from challenging and trying to outdo the young men in their own special pastime. He is that common figure in Otway's tragedies, the old man who will not retire, and in this he differs from, for example, Marius senior, in degree but not in principle.

There is no open hostility between father and sons. Acasto is only the agent of their frustration, for all members of the household are bound by the rigid rules of a domestic system which makes the father the unquestioned head of the house. And this very system, which

is now the cause of the sons' troubles, is also the framework in which they have grown and received sustenance in its different forms: food, wealth, security, care, and affection. The difficulty is that although they have grown mature, more particularly sexually mature, the system cannot allow for the independence of these young men that it has nurtured, if the father will not retire. The system of domestic order that they have loved and that has aided them is now strangling them, and although they are aware of being strangled, they are confused as to how or why.

The orphan of the title is Monimia, daughter of one of Acasto's old Cavalier friends who has died in the wars. Acasto has reared her from infancy but she is now of marriageable age, and, naturally, a source of interest to Castalio and Polydore. According to seventeenth-century mores as described by Taylor,[5] the attitude of the two men in their common pursuit of this woman is not one of bitter rivalry, but of mutual respect. Honourable dealings do not extend to the treatment of Monimia herself: the code is only between men, and the Restoration audience could be expected to know that for one brother to advance in his quest for Monimia without telling the other must lead to a serious rift. Therefore Castalio's secrecy in marrying Monimia, and Polydore's mistaken belief that Castalio has made an unannounced advance, leads to the bloodletting of Act V. As Polydore says in his dying moments:

> Polydore. Hadst thou, Castalio, us'd me like a Friend,
> This ne're had happen'd, hadst thou let me know
> Thy marriage, we had all now met in joy . . . .
> (V, 431-33)

The proper working of the Restoration code of honour as it pertained to

sexual rivalry is expounded in Titus and Berenice. On learning that Antiochus has long been his rival for Berenice's love, Titus declares, "A braver Rival I'd not wish to find,/Than him that dares be just and tell his mind (T and B, II, 53-54)." And when Antiochus reveals that he may not be able to restrain himself from pursuing Berenice while Titus is compelled to yield her in compliance with the Roman law, Titus replies:

> Titus. No more; I know thee, have thy Honour try'd,
> Firm still in Dangers found thee by my side.
> Thou knew'st my Love, whilst thine was yet conceal'd
> When all thy hopes by my success were quelled:
> Even at that time thou didst no falsehood show,
> And wilt not wrong me on advantage now.
> (T and B, II, 131-36)

As Polydore hears the couple furtively arranging their wedding night (furtively because Acasto must not know)[6] he, unaware of the marriage, thinks that Castalio has broken the code by making a secret assignation, and so decides upon revenge. He presents himself at Monimia's door as Castalio, is admitted, and spends the night with her in this guise, while Castalio, on arriving, is shut out, ironically because Monimia's servant believes him to be Polydore playing a trick. Voltaire has made fun of this implausible situation, claiming that Polydore would have been recognised by his voice;[7] and a spectator at an early performance cried from the audience that much trouble would have been saved by a farthing of rush candle.[8] But these comments do not do justice to Otway, for the play is so written that the emphasis is on why Polydore performs a trick rather than how.

The immediate cause of the deaths in The Orphan is Polydore's discovery that he has committed incest by sleeping with his brother's

wife instead of fornication with his brother's acquaintance. He deliberately picks a quarrel with Castalio and then throws himself on his sword so that honour may be satisfied. Yet, as a critic in the Gentleman's Magazine intimates, Polydore's mistake need not lead to death:

> Here let me observe that Polydore . . . after his deceiving Monimia, is represented as labouring under a sense of some extraordinary guilt, and expressing the utmost degree of anxiety and remorse. But for what? Why, he had violated his brother's wife! very true; but he intended no such matter, and their marriage was a secret to him. Therefore, upon Polydore's scheme of morals, I would fain know where lay the crime in all this?[9]

The relationship between Castalio, Polydore, and Monimia, improper though it may be, is not of itself sufficient to account for the tragic events in the play. To explain the difference between innocent cause and tragic effect, Taylor recalls the common eighteenth century theory[10] that in breaking the code of honourable behaviour, Castalio has something more grave in mind than merely the desire to be secretive. He is purposely reacting against the code because he truly loves Monimia, and marries her so that together they may share a life of felicity. He is not interested in using her in the ritualistic game of friendly rivalry with Polydore, and the tragedy is the result of a conflict between ethical ideals; the ideal of fraternal loyalty as practiced by Castalio and Polydore, and of marital constancy as between Castalio and Monimia. But this, again, does not account for the tragedy, first because none of the characters reveals any awareness of this conflict between ethics, and secondly, because Polydore's ignorance of such a

conflict renders him even more innocent of any intent to commit a crime.

An answer to the difficult question of locating the origins of the tragedy in The Orphan is provided by the issue of authority. Acasto's unyielding control over his sons is the root cause of Polydore's criminal act. Castalio and Polydore enter the play at the end of their patience. Their initial speeches disclose their bitterness. For Castalio, there is some relief from the frustration due to his being the heir and having found a wife. Polydore gets no alleviation from the incessant action of frustration. Everyone, it seems, has the right to inhibit his freedom. When he fails to make progress in Monimia's affections, he rails against the need to court women's friendship:

> Polydore. The lusty Bull ranges through all the Field
> And from the Herd singling his female out
> Enjoys her and abandons her at will.
> It shall be so, I'll yet possess my love
> Wait on and watch her loose unguarded hours.
> (I, 365-69)

When he hears the supposed assignation, he fears that his honour has been compromised by Castalio:

> Polydore. But for Castalio why was I refus'd
> Has he supplanted me by some foul play,
> Traduc'd my Honour? Death! he durst not do't.
> (III, 19-21)

As he plans his trick against Monimia he has Castalio uppermost in mind:

> Polydore. Oh for a means now how to Counterplot
> And disappoint this happy Elder Brother,
> In everything we do or undertake
> He soars above me, mount what height I can,
> And keeps the start he got of me at Birth.
> (III, 370-74)

His trick against Monimia is his last desperate attempt to assert himself against the frustrations that everyone seems to be imposing. But his revenge is misdirected, and indeed doubly so. He tries to take revenge on Monimia for a quarrel that he is having with Castalio, when his real antagonist is his father, Acasto. Polydore's act is an act of defiance by a man who is constrained by the force of authority and is unsure how to locate the source of the constraint. Such is his energy that he cannot go on living under the constraint, but such is his conscience that he is struck by remorse as soon as he tries to alleviate the constraint. In forcing himself on Monimia he ends up a criminal, and in recognising this he brings about his own death. Monimia commits suicide, and Chamont, her brother, kills Castalio to avenge his sister. The young people in Acasto's household are decimated, while the root cause is the frustration brought about by Acasto's overwhelming authority which displays itself as over-protective love.

The victims of the tragedy are, before the end of the play, united in at least a partial recognition of each others' difficulties. Before the duel of Act V, Polydore refers to his brother as "base-born Coward, Villain," but as soon as the fighting is over he admits that his anger was wrongly placed and now describes Castalio as "best of men," "kindest of brothers," and "truest friend," and asks to be forgiven for "the barbarous trespass of my Tongue (V, 450)." Castalio, for his part, tastes the unhappiness that Polydore has suffered all along, by discovering what it means to be shut out of the affections of others. When refused entry to Monimia's room on giving the prearranged signal, he rails against her:

Castalio. And farewell to all that's just in Woman!
This is contriv'd, a studyed Trick to abuse
My easie nature, and torment my mind;
Sure now sh'has bound me fast, and means to Lord it,
To rein me hard, and ride me at her will,
Till be degrees she shape me into Fool.
(III, 544-49)

Monimia, too, comes to feel the discomfort of exclusion:

Monimia. Now, I'm undone for ever: Who on Earth
Is there so wretched as Monimia?
First by Castalio cruelly forsaken;
I've lost Acasto: his parting frowns
May well instruct me, rage is in his heart . . . .
(IV, 337-41)

Castalio discovers the cause of his frustration only at the very end of the play when, on being invited by Acasto to have patience, he turns against his father with:

Castalio. Patience! preach it to the Winds,
To roaring Seas, or raging Fires; the Knaves
That teach it laugh at ye, when ye believe 'em.
(V, 510-12)

Acasto does not exactly laugh at those to whom he suggests patience, but nevertheless he does live on after they have died.

The Orphan employs all the features of Otway's tragic method listed in the Introduction to this dissertation. When the play is read with Acasto as the originator of the tragic events, the suitability of these techniques is revealed. The list, as it applies to The Orphan, may be briefly reviewed as follows. First, Acasto, by insisting upon trying to remain active himself, and by interfering with the freedom of his sons, behaves inappropriately for a man of his age. He creates intolerable tensions within his household by refusing to retire from the directing of domestic affairs. Secondly, he plays the dual role of

father and man, having his way as an individual man by trading on the special influence he has over the young people as a father. Thirdly, Acasto remains alive at the end of the play whilst upholding his authority. But the price he pays is to cause the death of those over whom authority was exercised--Castalio and Polydore. Fourthly, whilst Acasto's continuing authority does not place him in sexual rivalry with his sons, his interference obstructs their maturity, including their sexual maturity. Also, the action of the play revolves around two matters of sexual significance, namely, the marriage of Monimia and Castalio; and Polydore's unintended incest with Monimia. Fifthly, Castalio and Polydore encourage the misfortunes that befall them by submitting to Acasto's rule. In spite of speeches that express their longing to be free, their actions belie a wish to leave Acasto's home. If Acasto insists upon being youthful in old age, Castalio and Polydore continue to be child-like in manhood. Chamont knows how to stand up to Acasto, but Castalio and Polydore, lacking Chamont's vigorous independence, suffer the consequences of their acquiescence in Acasto's authority. Sixthly, Monimia is a tender heroine in the style of Lavinia in Caius Marius and the Queen of Don Carlos, attempting to establish an affectionate relationship with a man of her choice, but obstructed by the authority figure of the older generation. Monimia behaves naturally in treating Acasto as a respected but superannuated guardian and by turning to Castalio as her husband and new protector. This normal development is thwarted in Acasto's house and Monimia becomes enmeshed in a conflict between father and sons that she is unable

to avoid and powerless to control. Lastly, features of Otway's own life may be seen in The Orphan. The mixed respect and resentment that the author felt for his patrons is portrayed in the relationship between Polydore and Acasto; Otway's frustrations as an unsuccessful suitor to Mrs. Barry, timidity as an actor, financial failure, and lack of official recognition, are transmuted into the frustrations of Polydore and Castalio; and Monimia may reasonably be viewed as a theatrical representation of the tender traits that Otway saw in Mrs. Barry's character.

The Orphan came to fame, and flourished in the theatre, because the play touched the emotions of audiences for one hundred and fifty years. Later audiences, reacting against sentimental tragedy, then judged it unacceptable as a piece for the theatre. As a work of literature, however, The Orphan contains material of more enduring interest, although the explication of the play has presented difficulties to the critics. A solution to the problem of locating the cause of the tragedy is provided by reading this work in the context of Otway's other tragedies, in which case it is found, like them, to derive its tragic effect from the theme of authority misused.

CHAPTER VII

VENICE PRESERV'D, OR, A PLOT DISCOVER'D (1682)

Otway found his source material for Venice Preserv'd in La Conjuration des Espagnols contre Venise of the Abbé de Saint-Réal. This early novel deals with a Spanish-inspired and unsuccessful rebellion against the established government of Venice. The subject was useful to Otway because it gave him an opportunity to expound the Tory position, with which he was in sympathy, at a time of English national crisis as feelings against the Whigs ran high over their manipulation of the Popish Plot. The two characters Antonio and Renault are scurrilous lampoons of Lord Shaftesbury, the Whig leader.

Within the framework of the political plot as taken from Saint-Réal, Otway developed an inner plot that re-iterated his tragic preoccupations--the misuse of authority; the conflict between the generations leading to the death of the younger men; the indecision of the tragic hero; and the divided loyalty of the heroine, expressed in tender language. To combine these issues with the political question, Otway promoted Jaffeir[1] and Pierre to leading positions in the conspiracy, and invented the character of Belvidera. By so doing, he created an inner trio that reflected and emphasised the political struggle being fought over the fate of Venice, with Belvidera supporting those in power (until the last Act of the play), Pierre as the spokesman for the rebels, and Jaffeir wavering between the two sides.

The question of authority suffuses Venice Preserv'd and is

expounded from the beginning of the play. At the same time that a rebellion is being planned against the Venetian Senate, Priuli, himself a Senator, is falling into private conflict with his daughter and son-in-law. Priuli enters the play defending his authority on two levels--as a father and as a state official. His violent outburst on being reminded of the marriage of Belvidera and Jaffeir reveals his horror at losing his domestic authority. To Jaffeir he cries:

> Priuli. May all your Joys in her prove false like mine;
> A sterile Fortune, and a barren Bed,
> Attend you both: Continual discord make
> Your Days and Nights bitter and grievous: Still
> May the hard hand of a vexatious Need
> Oppress, and grind you . . . .
> (I, 52-57)

There is no mention throughout the play of Priuli having any plans for Belvidera other than to keep her at home in a state of perpetual daughterhood. He is not offended because Jaffeir is trying to climb socially by marrying Belvidera: he simply wants no-one to marry her. Unable to prevent Belvidera's maturing to marriageable age, he uses his authority as a Senator to ruin her and her new family when she tries to make herself independent of him. Priuli insists upon continuing the rôle of protective father when no such rôle is needed, and turns violent when his protection is rejected.

On a more general level, the Senate as a whole, of which Priuli is one of the more respectable members, is accused by the rebels of having held on to power for too long. Pierre believes that after the rebellion,

Pierre. . . . Fools shall be pull'd
From Wisdoms Seat; those baleful unclean Birds,
Those Lazy-Owls, who, (perch'd near Fortunes Top)
Sit only watchful with their heavy Wings
To cuff down new fledg'd Virtues, that would rise
To nobler heights, and make the Grove harmonious.
(II, 166-71)

The rebels have no programme of reform and are concerned only with taking the place of the old Senators. But there is some justification for believing that the younger generation is to be preferred. The Senators have become arbitrary in the exercise of power, to the point that Jaffeir, who has saved Belvidera from drowning, is cast penniless into the street, and Pierre, who has fought in the defence of Venice, is imprisoned. More direct criticism is brought upon the Senate by the perverted antics of Antonio. In the late eighteenth century it was customary for the brothel scenes between Antonio and Aquilina the courtesan to be omitted from performances of Venice Preserv'd. But Goethe believed this to be an undesirable practice. He remarks: "It is they alone [the brothel scenes] which account for and go near to justifying the conspiracy; for we see in them how utterly unfit for government the Senate had become."[2] It is true that Renault, one of the rebels, is also lecherous, but he belongs to the older generation and so re-enforces the idea that the older men should be removed from office. Although Otway does not lavish sympathy on the rebels (showing them to be bloodthirsty and uncontrollably ambitious) he leaves the clear impression that the Senators have outlived their usefulness and ought to be replaced.

The technique by which the Senators retain power is that used by Otway's other authority figures. They gratify their desires as men

by using their paternal or political power. Priuli, the frustrated father, signs the order dismissing Jaffeir and Belvidera from their home, in the name of Priuli the Senator. Antonio the lecher gains the right to consort with Aquilina by invoking senatorial privilege. Venice Preserv'd is unique among Otway's tragedies in that the men of the younger generation recognise that they too must be provided with political powers if they are to succeed. They must have a power that raises them above the level of mere men, analogous to the power exercised by the Senators. The only role available to them in this respect is that of rebel, and this is the one that they therefore adopt. Henceforth they justify their ambitions and correct their grievances not as men but as political figures. Gosse has complained that Jaffeir's reason for joining the rebellion after having been impoverished by Priuli is insubstantial:

> The only point in which any weakness can be traced [in the plot of Venice Preserv'd] is the motive actuating Jaffeir to join the conspirators. The revenge of a merely private wrong upon a whole commonwealth is scarcely sane enough for the dignity of tragedy.[3]

But the rebellion and the poverty, both being the consequence of senatorial authority, require rebellious power to be used against them. In his wilder moments Jaffeir makes no distinction between his private quarrel with Priuli and his political quarrel with the Senate:

> Jaffeir. I've bound my self by all the strictest Sacraments,
> Divine and humane--
>
> Belvidera. Speak!--
>
> Jaffeir. To kill thy Father--
>
> Belvidera. My Father!

Jaffeir. Nay the Throats of the whole Senate
Shall bleed, my Belvidera . . . .
(III, ii, 138-41)

The antagonism that divides the two sides of the struggle in this play is intense largely because arguments incurred as men are answered at the political level, where force is greatly amplified.

The power provided by the position of Senator turns out to be more effective than that of rebel, and Jaffeir's boast that he and Pierre have deceived the Senate as they die on the scaffold is only a travesty of the victory that they had planned as ambitious conspirators. In Venice Preserv'd the men of the older generation have a total victory over those who try to replace them. And so, as in Don Carlos, Caius Marius, and The Orphan, the problem introduced at the beginning of the play--how to replace men who have already outlived their usefulness--remains unresolved at the end.

It is common for Otway's authority figures to be either direct sexual rivals of the tragic heroes, or to try to over-rule the sexual development of the heroes: the King of Don Carlos belongs to the first class; Marius senior of Caius Marius and Acasto of The Orphan to the second. Venice Preserv'd contains examples of both types. Antonio is portrayed almost exclusively as a debauched lecher. On the few occasions when he does turn his attention to his political duties, his skill is found to be in verbose speechmaking rather than in action. Yet in sexual matters, which are his forte, he is both comical and repulsive. Nevertheless, for all his senility, and much to Pierre's disgust, Antonio is able to steal Aquilina and be protected by "something they call privilege." Priuli is not debauched, but the result of his

unwarranted control over his daughter has a similar effect by forcing Jaffeir into a rebellious marriage and ultimately compelling him to join the conspiracy.

Jaffeir becomes a rebel only reluctantly. Although all Otway's tragic heroes exhibit indecision, especially young Marius, Titus, and Castalio, this quality is particularly obvious in Jaffeir because his choices are so painful. Hazlitt notes with approval how Jaffeir's "wayward sensibility" is poised between Pierre's "bold intrepid villainy" and the "loveliness" of Belvidera.[4] In Jaffeir, vacillation becomes a noble quality. His awareness of the viciousness of the Senate, and of the mixed frustration and cruelty of the rebels, racks his mind as he tries, according to his lights, to choose the best course of action. Says Summers:

> All our sympathies are with the weak, affectionate, impulsive Jaffeir who so loves his adored Belvidera, and who is tied by such fateful bonds to his dear comrade Pierre.[5]

Venice Preserv'd is a development over the other tragedies in that indecision arises less from the hero's weakness of character than from his need to make difficult decisions.

Critical opinion is divided about the significance of Belvidera. Those who emphasise Otway's contribution to sentimental tragedy believe that she was added to generate pity. Ward writes of "the exquisitely natural tenderness of the love scenes between Jaffeir and Belvidera,"[6] while Gosse states that "the character of Belvidera is one of the most exquisite, most loveable in literature."[7] That is to say, Belvidera is in the tradition of Monimia, and the Queen of Don Carlos. Other

critics, however, have taken a very different view, seeing Belvidera as an assertive character who plays a leading part in the tragedy, and who is motivated by self-interest. G. Williams claims that she "woos a spurious martyrdom at the hands of her husband"[8] and D. W. Hughes maintains that all the characters of Venice Preserv'd tend to regress to a sub-human condition, led by Antonio, and that "Belvidera, too, participates in this general limitation of horizons."[9] More familiar is Byron's description of Belvidera as "that maudlin b---ch of chaste lewdness and blubbering curiosity, Belvidera, whom I utterly despise, abhor, and detest."[10] These irreconcilable opinions arise if Belvidera is considered the central character in the tragedy, but the disagreement is simply avoided once she is relegated from this primary position. Venice Preserv'd is Belvidera's play only if the work is seen as a vehicle for "the glorification of the tear."[11] In the issue of authority misused, however, she has a significant but nonetheless ancillary function, with Jaffeir, the tragic hero, being the central character.[12] "The seriousness of the conflict," says Sutherland, "is largely due to the permanency of Jaffeir's relationships, on the one side with Pierre his friend, and on the other with Belvidera his faithful and loving wife."[13] Taylor is also of this opinion:

> Although Belvidera becomes so powerful under Otway's hands that she decides the fate not only of Venice but of the other characters as well, Jaffeir, in whom the conflicting emotions of love and friendship find their battleground, is the central character of the play. The swaying back and forth of his emotions is accompanied by the alternating supremacy of Pierre and Belvidera in deciding his actions.[14]

Showing a similarity to her father, the power that Belvidera does wield she wields wrongly, by confusing her public and private roles. When

she hears of the rebellion and learns that Priuli is to be murdered along with the rest of the Senate, she encourages Jaffeir to betray his fellow conspirators. She has personal reasons for this, both to save her father, and to ruin Renault, the leader of the rebellion, for his attempt on her virtue when she was his hostage. By allowing politics to be confused with her personal concerns she takes revenge for merely private wrongs on a whole conspiracy--her mind passing swiftly from Priuli in particular to the rebellion in general:

> Belvidera. Can I behold him
> With smiles of vengeance butcher'd in his age?
> The sacred fountain of my life destroyed.
> And canst thou [Jaffeir] shed the blood that gave me being?
> Nay be a traytor too and sell thy country?
> (III, ii, 156-60)

Her influence on Jaffeir, and her conversion to the rebel cause at the end of the play, indicate that she was not introduced by Otway solely to bring tears to the eyes of the auditors, but serves also to contribute to the conflict between the generations.

Although Venice Preserv'd is ostensibly about a Venetian political crisis and, behind that, an English political crisis, further investigation reveals that, in common with Otway's other tragedies, it deals with a conflict between the generations. But when we look at the inner trio of Belvidera, Jaffeir, and Pierre, a new idea suggests itself. If Jaffeir elects to follow Belvidera, he is choosing to remain in the condition of a child bound to Priuli by filial loyalty. If, on the other hand, he follows Pierre, he will be making at attempt to live as an independent man, in revolt against the politicians who have formerly controlled his life. In short, he is being asked to

choose between different stages of his own development, the child and the man. If he had been content to remain immature, a mere visitor in Priuli's house, he would have suffered the disadvantage of frustration but enjoyed the advantage of protection. If he decides to take the step into manhood, as Pierre invites him to do, he will have the advantage of freedom.

But the play reveals that no matter how desirable or necessary freedom may be for certain characters, it turns out to be attended with unforeseen difficulties. If Jaffeir wishes to outgrow Priuli's control, he must take account of the fact that he will have to compete with Priuli man for man, in the same way that the rebels must try to compete with the Senators on an equal footing. But it is not an equal footing. In trying to escape the condition of being dependents, the conspirators are forced to become rivals of Senators who have the power to crush rivals. Jaffeir illustrates this unequal conflict on two levels for, in his attempt to undergo a metamorphosis from boy to man, he finds himself in conflict with Priuli, an older man armed with both senatorial and paternal power.

Several speeches support the idea that Venice Preserv'd is intended to explore the transition from boyhood to manhood. In Act I Jaffeir approaches Pierre with,

> Jaffeir. . . . Bear my weakness,
> If throwing thus my Arms about thy Neck
> I play the Boy, and blubber in thy bosome.
> (I, 274-76)

Later Pierre replies,

Pierre. But be a Man, for thou art to mix with Men
Fit to disturb the Peace of the World,
And rule it when it's wildest--

to which Jaffeir gives his assurance,

Jaffeir. I give thee thanks
For this kind warning. Yet I will be a Man.
(II, 185-88)

The first impression that Jaffeir makes upon the conspirators is that "his Presence bears the show of Manly Vertue (II, 317)" and it is shortly after this that Jaffeir yields up Belvidera in a symbolic rejection of his state of dependence. When the couple meets again, in Act III, Belvidera declares her Portia-like fortitude in what at first seems to be an assertion of her own maturity, but that is soon exposed as a preliminary to showing her devotion to Priuli and the Senate. From this point, Belvidera will be increasingly the defender of the established order, trying to develop corresponding sentiments in her husband. But then, no sooner has she left, than Pierre enters with his appeal to Jaffeir, "I'd have thee be a Man if possible," and with the rebuke "wilt thou never/Never be wean'd from Caudles and Confections? (III, ii, 221-22)."

At the beginning of Act IV, Jaffeir swings back to Belvidera, but not without regret for his lost manhood:

Jaffeir. . . . Remember him, [Jaffeir himself] who after all
The sacred Bonds of Oaths and holyer Friendship,
In fond compassion to a Womans tears
Forgot his Manhood, Vertue, truth and Honour,
To sacrifice the Bosom that reliev'd him.
Why wilt thou damn me?
(IV, 14-19)

Then follows the harrowing scene in which Pierre strikes Jaffeir, and refuses to acknowledge "the man so call'd; my friend (IV, 295)." This

places Jaffeir fully on Belvidera's side but leaves him aware that his manhood has been compromised. He asks of Belvidera:

> Jaffeir. Am I a Coward? am I a Villain? tell me:
> Th'art the best Judge, and mad'st me, if I am so.
> Damnation; Coward!
> (IV, 448-50)

It is not until half way through Act V that Jaffeir makes a determined move into the manly state. It is prefaced by his rejection of Belvidera in a symbolic farewell to his boyhood:

> Jaffeir. I have sworn, Belvidera; by yon Heaven
> That best can tell how much I lose to leave thee,
> We part this hour for ever.
> (V, 303-05)

Jaffeir is then free to turn to Pierre, who has "an air of so much manly virtue (V, 402)" and, by stabbing them both, he enables them to defy the Senate and free themselves of its control, howbeit in a tragically inadequate way.

In Venice Preserv'd Otway introduced a new issue into the conflict that divides the generations, namely, that throwing off the yoke of authority is fraught with difficulties. Thus, when Jaffeir feels the urge to enter the manly state, he finds unexpected problems, the greatest of which, and under which all the rest are subsumed, is that now he must fend for himself against older men who are willing to accept him as a child but not as a rival. If he needs money he must earn it; if he needs power he must carve it out for himself. In both of these he signally fails. Added to this is the new experience of sexual rivalry presented by Renault, and the need to work in secrecy without the possibility of appealing to authority for justification or for help when things go wrong. In this his last tragedy, written near the end of his

short life, Otway was turning his attention to a deeper examination of the younger generation, by dramatising the process by which maturity is gained and the problems that accompany that process.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

As performable works for the theatre, Thomas Otway's tragedies have suffered such a serious decline that they are now little more than historical curiosities. The simplest explanation is that they have fallen victim to altered theatrical tastes. Audiences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries admired the emotional vigour with which Otway invested his characters, especially in the tenderness of the heroines and the agonised indecision of the heroes, and those plays in which he displayed his mastery of the craft of writing emotional dialogue, The Orphan and Venice Preserv'd, held the stage the longest. When the taste for emotional sentiment declined, the stage fortunes of Otway's tragedies declined with it. Accordingly, the tragedies may not be expected to return to the theatre, at least until tearful emotion comes into vogue once more.

But divorced from the stage, Otway's tragedies are supposed to reveal hidden weaknesses that go unnoticed in live performance. In his Short History of English Literature, George Saintsbury responds to the playwright's reputation for excellence by writing, "It is perhaps fortunate for Otway that the validity of these praises is not often tested by reading."[1] It may be claimed however, on the contrary, that Otway's reputation stands up well when his tragedies are studied analytically, rather than considered merely as pieces for the theatre. The question of authority that they have as a common theme does lend itself to

reading, and may well be overlooked in the theatre. In the study, the sufferings of the heroines do not obtrude as they would in the theatre, and the conflict between the male characters can receive its due emphasis.

In almost all cases, the heroes are found to be overwhelmed by older men who misuse the abstract powers entrusted to them. It is a subtle device, and the young men of these plays are intellectually incapable of solving it. Otway's heroes invite comparison with Shakespeare's Hamlet, because like the Danish prince, they are rendered incapable of action by an inner conflict whose symptoms are vacillation and a tendency to substitute speech for action. Yet the stage fortunes of Hamlet and Otway's tragedies could hardly be more different, Shakespeare's tragedy having been described as "unquestionably the most continuingly popular play of all time."[2] Nor can the discrepancy be assigned to poetry alone, for when at the height of his powers Otway's poetry was not incomparable with that of Shakespeare at the time of Hamlet.

Wherein, then, lies the difference in popularity between Hamlet and Otway's tragic heroes, since all are similarly frustrated and powerless young men? An answer is to be found in their respective powers of ratiocination. Hamlet's chief distinction is his intellect, with whose aid he is able to analyse his problems in soliloquy, whereas Otway's heroes rarely ask questions, and when they do, they can usually only name their problem "Fate," without solving it. "They lack," says Ham, "even the faintest glimmerings of intelligence."[3] Where does Senatorial power come from? Why does age confer authority? Why is

primogeniture a rigid law? Why do old men seek power beyond their time? How do young men come to be defeatist, and what is the cure? What is love? What is honour? A Hamlet would ask these questions confronted by Otway's heroes' problems. The answers may not issue in satisfactory action, but the asking of them would reveal to the characters and to the reader the causes of the tragic events.

In Otway's tragedies such questions are not asked and the misfortunes that befall the characters seem to be arbitrarily imposed by an author, himself driven to despair by a seemingly-inhospitable world. Because the heroes lack knowledge and self-knowledge, the reader gets little help in distinguishing the tragic forces by which these unfortunate heroes are controlled. Yet, in fact, although the characters are in a state of confusion, behind their disarray there is much art. The author does not announce his intentions through speeches in the plays, but a comparison of the tragedies reveals recurring patterns of behaviour of which the characters themselves are ignorant. The implication is that Otway's tragedies should not be dismissed as too slight to warrant study: on the contrary, they can only be expected to yield their meaning if studied with particular intensity.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

[1]John Downes, Roscius Anglicanus (London: J. W. Jarvis, 1886), p. 36.

[2]Oliver Goldsmith, The Bee in The Works of Oliver Goldsmith, ed. P. Cunningham (London: Murray, 1854), p. 127.

[3]Alexander Pope, "To Augustus," in Selected Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope, ed. William K. Wimsatt Jr. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 262.

[4]John Dryden, "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting." Preface to Du Fresnoy's De Arte Graphica, in Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. P. Ker (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961), II, p. 145.

[5]London Magazine, Nov. 1823, p. 549, cited in A. M. Taylor, Next to Shakespeare: Otway's "Venice Preserv'd," and "The Orphan," and Their History on the London Stage (New York: A. M. S. Press, 1966), p. 368.

[6]Aline Macenzie Taylor, Next to Shakespeare: Otway's "Venice Preserv'd," and "The Orphan," and Their History on the London Stage (New York: A.M.S. Press, 1966), p. 269.

[7]Roswell Gray Ham, Otway and Lee: Biography from a Baroque Age (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), p. v.

[8]John Robert Moore, "Contemporary Satire in Otway's Venice Preserv'd," Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America, 43 (March, 1928), pp. 166-81.

[9]E. H. W. Meyerstein, "The Dagger in Venice Preserv'd," Times Literary Supplement, September, 1951, p. 565.

[10]Taylor, pp. 19-20.

[11]Edmond Gosse, Seventeenth Century Studies (London: Heinemann, 1897), pp. 310-13.

[12]Thomas B. Stroup, "Otway's Bitter Pessimism," Studies in Philology, Extra Series No. 4 (January, 1967), pp. 54-75.

[13]Samuel Johnson, The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets (Chicago: Stone and Kimball, 1896), p. 171.

[14]Montague Summers, Preface to Complete Works of Thomas Otway, ed. Montague Summers (London: Nonesuch Press, 1926), p. xci.

[15]Gosse, p. 312.

[16]Summaries are given in the Dictionary of National Biography (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1909), XIV, and in Adolphus William Ward's A History of English Dramatic Literature, (London: Macmillan, 1899), III, pp. 413-19.

[17]Johnson, Lives, p. 172.

[18]Summers, p. lxiv.

[19]Ham (p. 182) writes, "[By 1682] his love had developed into an obsession from which he emerged only for brief intervals." In the Times Literary Supplement (3 March, 1927, p. 133), Bonamy Dobrée gives similar information about Mrs. Barry's effect on the playwright: "Unable or unwilling to forbid approaches, she kept the unfortunate Otway in a state of suspense which drove him to distraction. This was the central experience of his life, the experience which determined his outlook and his mentality . . . ."

[20]Ham, p. 82.

[21]Ham, p. 78.

[22]In discussing Otway, Dr. Johnson is reported to have stated, "Sir, he is all tenderness." Burney's General History of Music, cited in Taylor, p. 251.

[23]William Collins, "Ode to Pity," The Poems of Williams Collins, ed. Edmund Blunden (London: Etchells and Macdonald, 1929).

[24]Preface to Don Carlos. Ghosh, p. 174.

[25]Walter Scott, The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart. (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1834), VI, p. 356.

[26]Ham, p. 81.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

[1]George Henry Nettleton, English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century (1642-1780) (New York: Macmillan, 1914), p. 24.

[2]Summers, p. xxvii.

[3]Plutarch, Selected Lives from the Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans, ed. Paul Turner (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois U.P., 1963), pp. 90-91. This edition has been somewhat modernised from Thomas North's translation.

[4]Ham, p. 45.

[5]John Dryden, "The Conquest of Granada Part I," The Dramatic Works of John Dryden, ed. George Saintsbury (Edinburgh: William Patterson, 1882), Act I, Sc. i, p. 43.

[6]In a love-letter he complains to Mrs. Barry, "In short, I have made it the Bus'ness of my Life to do you service, and please you, if possible by any way to convince you of the unhappy Love I have for seven Years toil'd under; and your whole Bus'ness is to pick illnatur'd Conjectures out of my harmless freedom of Conversation, to vex and gall me with, as often as you are pleased to Divert your self at the expence of my Quiet. Oh, thou Tormenter!" The Works of Thomas Otway. Plays, Poems, and Love-Letters, ed. J. C. Ghosh (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932), II, p. 480.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1]Summers, p. xlv.

[2]Ham, p. 77.

[3]Sigmund Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams," The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud, tr. and ed. by A. A. Brill (New York: Modern Library, 1938), p. 308.

[4]Ham, p. 78.

[5]Carlos and Eboli express comparable states of dissatisfaction at being held in secondary positions. Eboli asks:

> Was I bred up in Greatness, have I been
> Nurtur'd with glorious hopes to be a queen;
> Made love my study, and with Practic'd Charms
> Prepar'd myself to meet a Monarch's Arms;
> At last to be Condemn'd to the Embrace
> Of One, whom Nature made to her disgrace?
> An old Imperfect feeble dotard, who
> Can only tell Alas! what he would do?
> (I, 219-26)

And Carlos complains in similar terms:

> Father! and King! both names bear mighty sense:
> Yet sure there's something too in Son, and Prince.
> I was born high, and will not fall less great,
> Since Triumph Crown'd my Birth, I'le have my Fate,
> as Glorious and Magestic too, as that.
> To Flanders Posa, strait my Letters send,
> Tell 'em the injur'd Carlos is their Friend.
> (IV, 16-22)

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1]Summers, lxii.

[2]J. C. Ghosh, ed., Introduction to The Works of Thomas Otway (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932), p. 43.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

[1]Most authorities date the composition of Caius Marius before The Orphan. Sydney Lee in the Dictionary of National Biography, (1909), XIV, puts The Orphan first but concedes that the writing of at least part of Caius Marius was undertaken as early as 1678 when Otway was serving with the army.

[2]Ham, p. 132.

[3]Louis M. Eich, "A Previous Adaptation of Romeo and Juliet," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, 23 (1937), pp. 589-90.

[4]Ham, p. 132.

[5]Plutarch, p. 173.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

[1]Taylor, p. 11.

[2]Johnson, Lives, p. 171.

[3]Nettleton, p. 101.

[4]Elizabeth Inchbald, ed., The British Theatre (London: Longmans, Hurst, and Orme, 1808), p. 5.

[5]Taylor, pp. 19-20.

[6]Taylor condones Castalio's secrecy. "Implicit in Castalio's fear of Polydore's betrayal is the idea that someone in authority would take steps to prevent his marriage. Since the only person who would have such authority is their father, Acasto, this fear seems to imply that Acasto disapproves of the match and is disposed to prevent it" (Taylor, p. 25).

[7]Writes Voltaire, "Polydore, ayant joui a son aise du fruit de sa superchérie, apparament sans dire mot, a laissé là sa conquête, et s'est allé reposer" (Voltaire, "Appel a Toutes les Nations de l'Europe," Oevres Complètes de Voltaire (Paris: Hachette, 1860), p. 407.

[8]"Oh! what an infinite deal of mischief would a farthing rush-light have prevented." Quoted in David Erskine Baker, Biographica Dramatica (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1967, reprint of Longman's edition, London, 1812), III, p. 105.

[9]"Remarks on the Tragedy of The Orphan," The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle, 18 (1748), pp. 505-06.

[10]Taylor, p. 35.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

[1]Ghosh's anglicised spelling "Jaffeir" has been used in place of Saint-Réal's "Jaffier."

[2]Henry Crabbe Robinson, Diary, ed. Thomas Saddler (London: Macmillan, 1872), I, p. 99.

[3]Gosse, p. 329.

[4]William Hazlitt, "Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth." Complete Works, ed. P. P. Howe (London: Dent, 1931), VI, p. 355.

[5]Summers, xc.

[6]Adolphus Ward, A History of English Dramatic Literature (London: Macmillan, 1899), III, p. 418.

[7]Gosse, p. 332

[8]Gordon Williams, "The Sex-Death Motive in Otway's Venice Preserv'd," Trivium (Lampeter: St. David's College, 1967), 2 (May, 1967), p. 66.

[9]Derek W. Hughes, "A New Look at Venice Preserv'd," Studies in English Literature, 11 (1971), p. 445.

[10]Lord Gordon Noel Byron, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, ed. Thomas Moore (Paris: Calignani, 1831), III, p. 120.

[11]Ham, p. 80.

[12]Even as an emotional creation Belvidera irritates Dobrée: ". . . though Belvidera is a necessary element, one cannot always refrain from wishing her away." Times Literary Supplement, 3 March, 1927, p. 134.

[13]James Runcieman Sutherland, English Literature of the Late Seventeenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), p. 80.

[14]Taylor, pp. 59-60.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

[1]George Saintsbury, A Short History of English Literature (New York, 1935) cited in Taylor, p. 4.

[2]Joseph Shipley, Guide to Great Plays (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1956), p. 644.

[3]Ham, p. 88.

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